United Nations A/60/801

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 April 2006

Original: English

Sixtieth session
Agenda item 112 (e)
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 18 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nation and has the honour to inform him that the Government of the Republic of Albania has decided to present the candidature for membership to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the term 2006-2009, at the elections to be held on 9 May 2006.

Herewith enclosed are the Albanian Government's voluntary pledges and commitments in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 (see annex).

06-31999 (E) 010506

Annex to the note verbale dated 18 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Candidature of Albania to the Human Rights Council

Albania welcomes the establishment of the Human Rights Council and is very much committed to contributing so that the Council becomes a vigorous and efficient body of the United Nations System, in promoting and protecting human rights worldwide.

Albania has engaged in achieving the highest standards of human rights and has kept on working seriously for their accomplishment in day-to-day life.

Right after the establishment of the democratic system in Albania, the protection and promotion of human rights assumed a new dimension through: improving the legal framework, monitoring the situation, encouraging respect for and protection of human rights, increasing public awareness of the entire society on this issue, adopting concrete measures for the improvement of the domestic situation, and promoting debates among national actors. A major legislative reform has been carried out to bring the national legislation into compliance with the relevant international requirements. Albania remains strongly committed to further progress in this field and pledges to uphold the highest standards of human rights.

Albania has committed itself to comply with international human rights obligations. Albania has been submitting periodic reports to the United Nations bodies on the implementation of the main human rights conventions, under its legal obligations as a State party.

Albania is already party to the following relevant international instruments:

- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide;
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity;
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

- Framework Convention of the Council of Europe on the Protection of Minorities;
- The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
- The Republic of Albania is party to almost all Council of Europe human rights conventions and protocols;
- Albanian Government cooperates with the Steering Committee of Human Rights and the Committee for the Improvement of the Remedy Mechanisms on Human Rights, which review cases related to the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, in terms of the implementation of the European Convention of Human Rights from the member countries. It is also worth mentioning Albania's cooperation with the structures on the protection of human rights attached to the Council of Europe such as: the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and the Committee for the Prevention of Torture;
- Another aspect of the engagement of Albania in the context of the human rights protection is the implementation of the Framework Convention on the Protection of Minorities and the report submitted by Albania in this respect.

Albania will remain committed and active to advance human rights both on the national and international level.

On the national scale

Albania will continue to meet all its obligations in the human rights field, by attaching priority to the increase of public awareness, inclusion and harmonization of work among actors from the civic society, the Government and private sector. Non-governmental organizations are and will remain actively operating in this field.

Albania will continue to promote a human rights-based approach through a better integration of human rights, both in the decision-making process and policy implementation.

The respect for and the practical promotion of minority human rights remains a priority of the domestic policy for the Albanian Government. Big strides have been already made in the field of minority education, conduct of their own rights in the spheres of political, economic, social, cultural and religious life. The National Committee on Minorities is expected to be established soon under the Prime Minister, with the objective of observing the protection and respect of human rights for minorities.

Albania has concluded the drafting of national strategies on the following:

- Rights of children
- Women's rights
- Anti-trafficking of human beings
- Roma minority

On the international scale

Albania will soon ratify:

- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Optional Protocols of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Amendments to articles 17 (7) and 18 (5) of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Amendments to article 43 (2) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Albania will render its contribution to the adoption in August 2006 of the draft comprehensive and integral convention on the protection and promotion of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.

Albania strongly supports the efforts to strengthen the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Albania will closely cooperate with the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights and pledges to lend continuous voluntary contributions.

Albania pledges to fully cooperate with the Human Rights Council and with its special procedures.

If elected to the Council, Albania commits itself to contribute to ensure that the Human Rights Council handles human rights issues with impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, both in the discussion and decision-making process; fosters the constructive dialogue and cooperation among civilizations, cultures and religions; responds effectively and quickly to human rights violation or human rights crisis wherever they occur; increases opportunities for the contribution of non-governmental organizations.

It would be an honour and privilege for the Republic of Albania to serve in the newly established Human Rights Council. Albania believes that representation of new democracies and small States in the Council will absolutely add to its value and contribution.